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Genuine, Impartial, and Authentick

A C C O U N T
O F T H E
L I F E
O F
William Parsons, Esq;

Executed at Tyburn, Monday, Feb. 11, 1751.
For returning from TRANSPORTATION.

CONTAINING, 10

The Particulars of his whole LIFE, from his
BIRTH to his DEATH; taken from MEMOIRS
of his own Hand-writing, and communicated by him to
a Person who attended him during the whole Time of
his Confinement in Newgate.

Wherein is a

True ACCOUNT of his Amours, his Forgeries, and
other Villanies — his Behaviour both here and Abroad —
a particular Account of the Robberies he committed
while in *America*, as well as the Particulars of those he
committed in *England* since his Return from Transpor-
tation (which he revealed but the Night before his Execu-
tion) — his Behaviour in *Newgate*, and other remarkable
Matters, well worthy the Perusal of the Publick.

To which is added, by Way of APPENDIX,
Exact Copies of many remarkable LETTERS that pass'd
between him and several Persons while he was in *New-
gate*; Particularly to and from his Father, his Wife, his
Brother and Sister, Mr. Fuller, to a noble Earl, &c. &c.
The Originals of which are in the Hands of C. Corbett,
in Fleet-Street.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. PARKER, in Jewin-Street, and C. COR-
BETT, in Fleet-Street. 1751. [Price One Shilling.]

*The following was wrote by Mr. Parsons the
Morning of his Execution, and delivered by him
to Mr. Baldwin, just before his Fetters were
knock'd off.*

My dear Friend Baldwin,

IT is my earnest Request and Desire, that the
Inclosed which contains the most material
Occurrences of my past Life, which I attest are
real Facts, may be made Public as soon as con-
venient after my Decease, that the World may
see (though guilty of Follies) how hardly I
have been used, how the Ties of Blood have been
disligated, and I doubt not the Humane and
Candid will commiserate my Calamities.

I am,

Your affectionate Friend,

Tho' now expiring,

WILL. PARSONS.



MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF

William Parsons, Esq;



WILLIAM PARSONS, Esq;
was the Son of Sir *William Parsons*, Baronet, of *Nottingham*; the Account of his Family being in the Baronets of *England*, and not very long, I shall here transcribe it for the Satisfaction of my

Readers.

The first we find of this Family is *Ralph Parsons*, of the County of *Northampton*, Father of *John Parsons*, of *Boveny*, in *Com. Bucks*, Esq; who married the Daughter

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of

" of ~~-----~~ Cutler, and had Issue Sir John
 " Parsons, of Boveny and Langly, in Com.
 " Bucks, Knt, who married Elizabeth, Daughter
 " and sole Heir of Sir John Kidderminster, of
 " Langley, in Bucks, Knt. (by Mary his Wife,
 " Daughter of Sir William Garrard, of Dorney, in
 " Bucks, Knt. by whom he had Charles, aged nine,
 " 1634, who died S. P. William; Mary, seven
 " Years old, 1634; Anne, five Years old, 1634;
 " Elizabeth, aged 8 Months, 1634.

" William Parsons, Esq; eldest surviving
 " Son and Heir, was advanced to the Dignity
 " of a Baronet by King Charles II. He mar-
 " ried Elizabeth, Daughter and Heir of Sir
 " Laurence Parsons, Knt. and had two Sons
 " and two Daughters; Sir John, his Successor,
 " and Colonel Parsons, who married the
 " Daughter of Sir John Barker, and died S. P.
 " Sir John Parsons, Bart. his eldest Son and
 " Successor, married Catharine, Daughter of
 " Sir Clifford Clifton, Knt. Sister and Co-heir
 " of Sir William Clifton, of Clifton, in Com.
 " Nottingham, Bart. by whom he had Issue
 " Sir William, his Successor, and a Daughter.

" Sir William Parsons, Bart. only Son and
 " Successor to his Father, Sir John Parsons, is
 " the present Baronet; he hath been twice
 " married, first to Frances, Daughter of Henry
 " Dutton, Esq; and Niece to Mary, late Du-
 " chess of Northumberland, by whom he had
 " two Sons, John, now Fellow of Merton Col-
 " lege, Oxford, and William, Lieutenant in
 " Colonel Cholmondeley's Regiment of Foot,
 " and married Mary, Daughter of John Tramp-
 " ton, of the Exchequer, Esq; and one Daughter
 " Grace, who is unmarried, to whom the late
 " Duchess

“Duchess of Northumberland left a considerable Fortune.”

William Parsons was born in *Red-Lion-Square*, in *London*, in the Year 1717. At a proper Age his Father sent him to *Pepperbarrow*, near *Godalmin*, in *Surry*, to receive the first Light of Education, under the Care of the Reverend Mr. *Gruby*, a Gentleman eminent for his Piety and Learning. Under the Tuition of this worthy Man he remained between three and four Years, and from thence was sent to *Eton-College*, that he might there compleat his juvenile Exercises, and fit himself for the University. He remained at *Eton* about nine Years, but thro’ an ill Habit and Proneness to Idleness, he made so small a Proficiency in Erudition, or at least received his Instructions with such Inattention and Neglect, that the Traces of his academic Learning were very shortly erased, and little appeared but Nature, slightly polished, when he came from School.

While he was at *Eton* he used to frequent the Shop of Mr. *Pote*, a Bookseller, where he could not possibly keep his Hands from pilfering; Mr. *Pote* missed several of the Volumes of *Pope’s Homer’s Iliads*, and knew not where to fix, but was resolved to watch the Motions of every Person that came, and it was not long before Mr. *Parsons* gave him an Opportunity of detecting him; for the very next Time he came Mr. *Pote* caught him in the Fact of putting one of them into his Pocket: Mr. *Pote* directly charged him with stealing the others, which he confessed, and he received the publick Discipline of the School.

He was much more the fine Gentleman than the Scholar, and indeed endeavoured rather to

be such; for the Study of Men was more his Delight than the Improvement of his Mind and Morals, or the Attainment of Learning; not but his Genius and Aptitude were sufficiently strong to have made him an Ornament to his Country, but his Levity of Thought, his Love of Pleasure, and contracted Propensity to Gaiety and *Nonchalance*, made him pursue ardently the Bent of his Passions, in a calm Indifference, rather than subjugate them to the Sway of Reason, or thwart his Inclinations.

Soon after he came from *Eton*, to prevent as much as possible his getting into bad Company, and too soon assuming the Privileges of Manhood, his Father got him a Place in the Navy, and he was qualified as a Midshipman on Board of his Majesty's Sloop the *Drake*, Capt. *Fox*, in 1735, who was then ordered to sail from *Spithead* to *Jamaica*, where she was station'd for three Years. However, the Sloop not proceeding immediately on her Voyage, he obtained Liberty to go Ashore on a Party of Pleasure, when instead of returning to his Duty, like a prudent Officer, he went away to *Bishop's Waltham* in *Hampshire*, about ten Miles from *Portsmouth*. Here acting with his usual Gaiety, and appearing always in a genteel handsome Manner, he soon ingratiated himself into the Company of the chief Inhabitants, and indeed, to do him Justice, his Address and Behaviour externally spoke the Gentleman; for as he was well versed in Complaisance and Politeness, he easily gained an Ascendancy over the Passions, and a bare Interview or two with any one, was sure to gain him their Regard.

During his Stay here at *Waltham*, he fell in Love with a very pretty young Lady, a Doctor's Daughter

Daughter and so far prevailed over her, as even to gain her Affections, and a Consent to Matrimony. This fill'd his Heart with Glee, and the Hopes of possessing an innocent, handsome young Lady, with a handsome Parcel of *Ready Money*, had a very strong Effect upon him, and he impatiently waited for the Consummation of his Wishes. But very luckily for his intended Bride, the News of his dawning Marriage soon reached the Ears of his Uncle, who, to prevent the Ruin of the poor Girl, and his Abode in *England*, hastened down, with all the Speed he could, and sent him again on Board the Sloop, which in a few Days weighed Anchor, and set Sail for her destin'd Port, in Company with his Majesty's Ship *Kinsale*, Captain *Forrester*, on Board of which was his Excellency — *Cunningham*, who was going to his Government at *Jamaica*, to which Place they made the best of their Way, touching in their Passage at the Island of *Madeira*. He had not been long at *Jamaica*, before he grew very sick of his Situation, and earnestly wished to return to *England*, that he might retaste the Pleasures of Love, and enjoy the Company of his favourite Fair. But as there was no other Way to effect this, than by running away, and leaving his Ship clandestinely, the Passion operated too violently to allow him to hesitate, and he immediately determined to leave the *Drake*, and ship himself on Board another Vessel, for his native Country.

His Majesty's Ship *Sburness* being then at *Jamaica*, and ordered Home, he applied to Capt. *Myler Stapleton*, and shipped himself on Board the said Ship, in the Quality of Midshipman, and soon came again to *England*. Thus arrived, he directly steer'd to his old Haunt (*Walstham*) and was

was entering on his former Schemes, when, as ill Fortune would have it, his Uncle (who had been a second Time informed of his Proceedings) went and surprized, and prevented him. He now lost all Hopes, and every Plan that he laid seem'd subverted as soon as formed; for his Uncle kept him close confined, and had too strict an Eye over his Conduct for him to escape his Seclusion, till such Time he could find an Opportunity of sending him Abroad again; when a very favourable Occasion soon presented itself: For his Majesty's Ship, *Romney*, Captain *Medley*, being stationed on the Banks of *Newfoundland*, he was shipped on Board her in his former Station of Midshipman. Here, to his great Mortification, he was obliged to stay till the *Romney's* Return, and on his Arrival in *England*, found his Affairs in a very tatter'd Condition; for during his Stay Abroad, some busy, artful Persons, had by base Insinuations, and crafty Schemes and Contrivances, incensed the Duchess of *Northumberland* so greatly against him, that she directly altered her Will, which she before had made quite in Favour of him, and bequeathed his intended Legacy, which was very considerable, to his Sister. His Friends were all enraged at his former Behaviour at *Waltham*, and so greatly disobliged, that they would not admit him in any of their Houses, not even see him; so that he was destitute of almost every individual Necessary in Life.

Mr. B— (a Gentleman who was very intimate with, and had a great Regard for, his Family) seeing to what Streights he was reduced, very hospitably received him into his House, and permitted him to stay with him a considerable Time, furnishing him with necessary Supplies, to support the Character of a Gentleman. In this Interval

of Time, Mr. B— strenuously interceded in his Favour with his Father, and with some Difficulty brought him over to a Reconciliation.

When Sir *William* urged him to go Abroad again, and for that Purpose got him a Place in the Service of the *Royal African Company* of *England*, at *James Fort*, in the River *Gambia*, for which Place he set Sail, in Company with Governor *Auseur*, on Board the *Happy Deliverance*, in the said Company's Service. After his Abode some-time at *James Fort*, a Dispute arose betwixt him and the Governor, who wanted to make him an indented Servant for five Years; but Mr. *Parsons* told him, such Designs as those were entirely derogatory from his Promises, and diametrically opposite to his own Inclinations and Intentions, and that it was Usage he did not expect from Mr. *Auseur*, and unbecoming a Man of Probity and Honour, and a Gentleman.

Upon these Intimations he insisted strongly upon being permitted to return to *England*, which the Governor absolutely refused, and gave Orders to the Centinels to keep a strict Eye over him, and watch him from making his Escape: Notwithstanding these Precautions of the Governor's, Mr. *Parsons* resolutely adhered to his Intentions, and determined, at all Events, to quit the Coast of *Africa*, and by some Means get to *England*.

Mr. *Parsons* finding an Opportunity, set out one Day from *James Fort*, fully bent to embark on Board some Ship that was Homeward bound, and return to *London*. This News soon reach'd the Ears of the Governor, who immediately went after Mr. *Parsons*, and upon overtaking him, insisted on his returning with him to *James Fort*; which he very resolutely refused, and cocking a Pistol at him, assured him, that the first Man that

should be seen to go off.

offer'd to touch him he would shoot dead upon the Spot. Mr. *Auseur* finding it fruitless to parley with, or endeavour to persuade him to return to the Factory, very prudently left him to pursue his Voyage, and return unmolested to *England*.

He immediately went on Board a Ship that was Homeward bound, and in a short Time came back safe to *London*, where he had not been long, before the News of his Arrival reached his Uncle, who sent him a very kind Invitation to his House at *Epſom*, which he accepted, and upon waiting on him was favourably received. Here he stayed, and was treated with a great deal of Affection and good Nature; but as his idle Passions always hood-winked his Reason, and subjected him to numerous Difficulties, Dangers and Calamities, which otherwise he never would have felt, yet he wanted either Inclination or Resolution to subdue his *Hydra*, or the imaginary *Herculean Labour* intimidated his Courage. Whatever was the Motive, a Sort of evil Genii seem'd to attend him, and he rather chose to buffet the Storms of Adversity for a Month, than lose the Gratification of his Desires, even for an Hour. How poor a Thing is Man, who is thus led by every Folly, and blindly pursues his Ruin even voluntarily! In stern Defiance of the Laws of God and Man, the Checks of Virtue, the Dictates of moral Conscience, moral Honesty, and the Ties of Nature, impetuously rushes on eternal Perdition, wallows in Sin and Iniquity, and merely to indulge a sudden Gust of intemperate Passions, sacrifices every generous, honourable, humane Sentiment, and sinks himself beneath the Animal Creation. How few remember, that Angelick Greatness is Angelick Virtue,
And none are great and happy but the Virtuous.

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As tho' a calm Serenity, and peaceful Quietude was his Aversion, and he was a sworn Foe to Content and Peace; or, as if the least Draught of Success and Tranquillity intoxicated his Reason, so he now display'd a glaring Stroke of youthful Folly and Rashness. During his Abode with his Uncle, he imprudently condescended to an Intimacy with one of the Maid-Servants, and got her with Child, which she swore him to be the Father of. This incensed his Uncle to such an excessive Degree, that he immediately turn'd him out of Doors, friendless and penniless, and left him to seek for Shelter, where he could find any one hospitable enough to give him Admittance. Destitute of every individual Necessary beneath the Sun, he bent his Course towards *London*, not knowing where to fly for Refuge; and was reduced to such Penury, as to have no more than three Half-pence for four Days, and frequently used to quench his Thirst at the Pumps in the Streets. In this Interval he lay four Nights in a Hayloft, belonging to the *Master of the Rolls's* Stables in *Chancery-Lane*, his weak and miserable Condition influencing the Coachman to commiserate his Case, and shelter him from the Inclemency of the Weather. However, his Thoughts now suggested to him an Expedient for Redress; he therefore went immediately to a Gentlewoman, (whose Abode he knew) who in his puerile Years had lived with the Duchess of *N-----*. This Person seeing the tattered Plight he was in, and the Wretchedness of his Circumstances, had Compassion on him, and procured him a pretty Lodging at an Acquaintance's of her's in *Cambridge-Street*. Here (thro' her Recommendation, and the Detail she gave of his Misfortunes and Calamities) the whole

Family seem'd interested in his Behalf; treated him with the greatest Good-nature and Humanity, and generously boarded him all the while he stay'd there, whilst one Mr. H—— bountifully furnished him with Money for his Pocket, and to procure himself necessary Supplies.

Some short Time after, hearing his Father was in Town, in *Conduit-Street*, he determin'd to apply to him; he therefore went to his House, and the Servant not knowing who he was, immediately introduced him. His Father was prodigiously surprized at this so unexpected a Visit, and he immediately fell on his Knees, confess'd his Sorrow for his Follies, earnestly craved his Pardon for past Misconduct, and promised an entire Amendment: Upon this his Father granted him his Pardon, but his Mother-in-Law, who happen'd to be present when he came in (with the Tenderness, Humanity, and Compassion, which generally distinguishes the *lawful* from the *natural* Mother, and which gives them an undoubted Claim to our warmest Affection and kindest Respect) flew out of the Room in the most violent Rage, exclaimed against him in the sharpest Invectives, and bitter Reproach, and would not even suffer him to speak to her.

His Father ask'd him now what he intended to do, and if he had no Thoughts of settling for Life? He told him in his then Situation he did not know what to do, being reduced to great Necessity, and craved his paternal Assistance and Advice. His Father told him, as he was young and healthful, and an able-bodied Man, in his Opinion, he could not do better in those Circumstances, than to enlist himself as a private Man in *His Majesty's* Regiment of *Life-Guards*. This Counsel from his Father he thought very salutary,

salutary, and as he imagined that his complying with it might be a Means of forwarding an entire Reconciliation, he left him, with Thanks for his Pardon, fully determined to put his Advice in Execution. Thus resolved, he went immediately to the *Horse-Guards*, and offer'd himself as a Volunteer, to serve in the King's *Life-Guards*: But how great was his Surprise, when instead of receiving him, as he imagined they would without any Hesitation, they made a Demand of seventy Guineas for Admittance. This embarrassed him greatly, and entirely subverted all his airy Expectations, confident that his Father, with whom he had so long been at Variance, and who he had disoblged by every Action of his former Conduct, would never advance such a Sum of Money, to place him in the Station of a private Man; and with regard to himself, he had no visible Method of procuring such a Quantity of Money, nor indeed scarce a single Guinea. Chaglined and perplexed at this very unexpected Disappointment, he was pausing and pondering what to do; but his ruminated Thoughts could not suggest any Scheme to him sufficiently strong to effect the Affair, and that the only Method was to acquaint his Father of it, and by some Means or other endeavour to bring it to a favourable Issue. He therefore went directly to Mr. B—— in *Piccadilly*, to enquire if his Father was still in Town, but was inform'd in the Negative, and Mr. B—— gave him five Shillings, which he told him his Father had left for him before his Departure. This News had a violent Effect upon him, and as Reason always was a Slave to any of his dominant Passions, so now he seemed entirely to discard her for ever, and suffer himself to be guided by the weak Hand of black Despair.

His Courage, which had hitherto sustained and supported him in all his past Difficulties, and Vicissitudes of Fortune, now deserted his Standard, and left him to the Guidance of every usurping Passion. The Laws of Nature and Religion seem'd entirely banish'd, and Fear, which frequently restrains Mortals from Deeds of Desperation, (tho' he seldom was acquainted with Pusillanimity) had no Effect upon him, and he was determin'd, at all Events, to rid himself of a Life, which then was not only irksome, but even hateful to him.

Resolutely determin'd on this rash Action, and hurried by the Sallies of ungovernable Passion, he made the best of his Way to *St. James's Park*, intending to watch some *favourable* (as he term'd it) Opportunity, and drown himself in *Rosamond's Pond*. Thus his Mind was agitated by the Father of Mischief, and he was just going to rush into the dreadful Abyss of ETERNITY, when the all-wise Hand of Providence interposed, and prevented the Execution of his Design. But Heaven, whose Ways are inscrutable, and past the Comprehension of our narrow-limited *finite* Understandings, works by supernatural Causes, and through an unbounded Goodness, and unmerited Compassion, frequently diverts our Steps from the Paths of Ruin, and snatches us unexpectedly from *everlasting* Misery.

Whilst he stood hovering on the Verge of Life, a Thought came into his Head, whereby he might prevent his Fate, and procure to himself a comfortable Subsistence, at least for some Time. He immediately recollected that his Father's Sister was lately dead, and that he had received a Letter from his Acquaintance, who inform'd him that she had left his Brother a handsome Legacy, and of which Letter he now began

began to think of making a proper Use. His Imagination, ever fertile in Projects, now suggested to him one, which he thought might serve his present Purpose, and perhaps in the End prove beneficial and advantageous; getting amongst some Persons of his Acquaintance, who commiserated his indigent Circumstances, and relating the Death of his Father's Sister, as also that she had left him a very genteel Legacy; to effect his Ends, he produced the Letter above-cited as a Voucher, at the same Time asserting that his Acquaintance was wrong in his Information, since in lieu of his Brother it happened to be himself. Upon these Asseverations, some Persons advanced him several small Sums, under these specious Pretences of coming Riches, and which he promised faithfully to repay in due Time; acquainting them at the same Time, that doubtless they knew Legacies were never paid 'till a Twelvemonth and a Day after the Death of the Testator; and under Sanction of these Remonstrances, he was soon raised from his penurious Situation.

As Mr. *Parsons* was always endowed with a guileful Volubility of Tongue, and a good Master of the Passions, so having endeavoured always to read the Temper and Dispositions of Men, by their external Behaviour, and deeming the Face for the Generality, the *true Index* of the Soul; he seldom failed by some Art or other to discover the Weaknesses of his Intimates, and indeed casual Acquaintance. It was under such false Appearances and Insinuations, that he ingratiated himself into the Favour and good Opinion of Mr. R—, a Taylor in *Devereux-Court, Temple-Bar*; who, upon the artful Representations which Mr. *Parsons* displayed, credulously

lously believed all he advanced, and even heartily pitied his Calamities, but rejoiced that Fortune seemed then inclined to favour him, and give him an Opportunity of becoming serviceable, not only to himself, but also to the Community.

Mr. R—— commiserating his Situation, and believing all he had asserted to be real Facts, and that there was no Danger of being paid in due Time, very cordially supplied him with any Necessaries he thought proper to require in his Way of Business. Thus equipped with Cloaths, and mortgaging frequently his pretended Bequest, he was enabled to appear in a gay, genteel Manner, and frequent his old Haunts and Retirements, where he used to meet many of his Sunshiny Friends, who were glad of his new Acquisition of Wealth, thereby flattering themselves with becoming Sharers thereof, since no Man was more generous than he was, when he had it in his Power. But *Parsons* too fatally experienced, that instead of being able to spare a Quota to them, he had not even a *Quantum Sufficit* for himself. He was in this Situation, when he accidentally met one Day the Brother of his once favourite Fair, who lived at *Waltham* in *Hants*; and his Intent was to renew his *quondam* Acquaintance with him, and Addresses to his Sister, and which he had affected, had not the Information her Brother gave him of her sudden Death, made him bury such Thoughts. However, *Parsons* still kept a Correspondence with her Brother, finding it much to his Advantage, since upon the Representations he gave him of his Circumstances, he frequently received Sums of Money from him, and therefore it was not to his Purpose to forfeit so beneficial an Intimacy.

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At length his Creditors began to be somewhat anxious after their respective Debts, and to request his Payments thereof; which he very speedily promised them he would. This was to him very unpleasant, for he could not bear to be dunn'd; and therefore resolved to free himself, if possible, from their Solicitations, by some Means or other. But what Means was the main Point, and nothing seemed so likely, nor so easily compleated, as that of changing his Condition. This he wisely imagined the most facile Expedient he could put in Practice, and therefore set about it immediately; for as he was no Stranger to the Temperament of Female Constitutions, which are generally in Extremes, either a Levity and Thoughtlessness, or else a morose Petulancy, and vain Contempt, so it was no Difficulty to him to methodize his Conduct and Behaviour to their Inclinations and Dispositions. It was a Maxim with him, that none were more easily deceived, than those who are artful in Deception; and as Dissimulation is a peculiar Quality of the Fair Sex, he thought that Art alone could supply him with Weapons to conquer. Like a *bon Connoisseur* then, he apparels himself very gayly, and was a constant Visitor of every publick Place, such as Balls, Plays, Operas, &c. thinking such the most likely Quarries to find any Game. And as the Mind of Woman too often is captivated with outward Appearances, and modest Foppery, and gilded Nonsense, are preferred to plain Decency, and honest Sense, so he wisely consulted their Appetites, and endeavoured to sound their Inclinations, before he made any Professions of Love. However, as an idle *Amourette* was not now the Thing he wanted, and as Time was too precious to be lost in insignificant

nificant Triflings, his Business was to find a pretty Lady, with a pretty Fortune in her own Hands, and ingratiate himself so far into her Favour, as to be deputed Guardian of both Person and Estate.

Luckily for him, such a Prize soon fell to his Lot; for by mere Accident falling in Company with a young Lady, whose Father was just dead, and had bequeath'd her a handsome Estate, at her own Disposal, he thought it a favourable Occasion of introducing himself to her Acquaintance, and gradually gain her Esteem. Flushed with sanguine Hopes of obtaining his Point, he paid his Addresses to her, with the Deference and Respect which is due to the Sex, and under the Denomination of an Officer, having as he professed a great Veneration for the Function, and dresses as such, she permitted his Devoirs; qualified for Courtship as he was, both by Art and Nature, no Wonder he gained so easy a Conquest, and that his Artifices prevailed. His guileful Insinuations operated like Poison, and gained an entire Ascendance over every Female Obstacle; so that after a Series of four Months Courtship, she consented to be his. Elate with Joy, he eagerly acceded to the Proposal, and his Creditors being assured of his approaching Nuptials, and the Fortune he would thereby possess, were entirely satisfied, and readily supplied him with every Thing necessary for the Ceremony, in Hopes that they should thereby be paid their several Debts.

All Things being agreed on, and settled to their mutual Satisfaction, the Marriage was solemnized the 10th or 11th of February, 1740, and he placed in full Possession of his Desires. Now, could he have been content, he might have enjoyed

ed a continual Scene of uninterrupted Pleasure; Felicity smiled upon him, and had not his Soul been a Slave to his Passions, his Days on Earth might have been crowned with Joy. But as his Mind was continually fluctuating betwixt ten Thousand different Ideas, he never could frame one solid, stable Resolution; and to this Mutability of Temper, is owing many of his Misfortunes; for though Craft and Artifice, with a very teeming Brain, furnished him with numerous Schemes, yet this Migration of Mind made him diffident of Success, and e're he had tried the Event of one Project, would rashly determine on some other, that perhaps, just at that Crisis, seemed more secure, and better laid.

The News of his Marriage soon reached the Ears of his Uncle, who upon Information thereof immediately came to Town, and treated him with the greatest Affection and Friendship; assured him of his Favour and Kindness, provided he had now disclaimed all past Follies, and purposed to lead a new Life. All his Relations in general were highly pleased at this Action, hoping it would fix his roving Mind, and prevent his running into future Mischiefs and Extravagancies; and to encourage him the more in the Pursuit of Virtue, and incline him to a serious Way of Thinking, they made what Interest they could in his Favour at Court, and through the Intercession of the Right Honourable A—O—, Esq; he received a few Days after his Marriage, a Commission from *His Majesty*, appointing him an *Ensign* in Colonel Cholmondeley's Regiment of Foot. This Honour so unexpectedly received, and so undeservedly conferred, gave him new Spirits, and his Soul was so elate with dawning Happiness, that he had no other Vision before

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his Eyes but Scenes of continual Pleasure, and undisturbed Content. Gratitude doubtless influenced him to thank his generous Benefactors, for their unmerited Marks of Kindness ; and still to excite them the more in his Favour, and induce them to cherish a favourable Opinion of him, he prudently discharged all the Debts he owed, of every Nature, and freed himself from all Incumbrances whatsoever. Whether prompted to this Deed by the Principles of Honesty and Honour is immaterial, but it was at least an Act of Self-Preservation, and of keeping his Credit unstained and unblemished. And it was by such Means as these, that upon an Emergency, his Needs were supplied in future.

As the best Way to overcome any vicious Habits, and to restrain his outrageous Passions, was a fix'd and settled Habitation, he directly hir'd, and fitted genteelly, a House in *Poland-Street*, where he lived two Years, equally loving, and beloved by all his Friends and Acquaintance, and esteemed by all who knew him. During this Sojournment he had two Children, one of whom is now living, and is Heir to all his Expectations. I hope it will be pardon'd me here making a short Digression from my Narrative: This surviving Son (if any Thing did) seem'd to give him more Concern than even the Apprehensions of Death ; and he has often own'd, that as the Inhuman and Ungenerous might reflect upon his Child for his Misconduct, the Thoughts of so ignominious an Exit from the World, and thereby subjecting his guiltless Son to unmerited Reproach, and unjust Calumny, gave him more Uneasiness than all his other Thoughts.

Tho' this by some may be deem'd a nice Point of Honour, yet I cannot perceive any particular Delicacy

Delicacy of Sentiments ; nor is it an evident Proof that there were yet remaining some latent Seeds of Honour in his Breast. For a Man of Sense and Understanding, labouring under his unhappy Circumstances, should have turned his Thoughts towards a future State, rather than any Thing terrestrial, and have endeavoured to compose his Thoughts, and fit them for an *awful Exit*. He should have strove to guard against that Shock, which the Nature of any Man must feel, who has the least Sense remaining of Probity and *true Honour*, from so hideous a Spectacle, so terrible a Scene, as that of a public ignominious Execution. It was his Duty to turn his Thoughts towards *Eternity*, to meet his Fate with a calm, serene, and undisturbed Mind, that his Soul might not be impeded in her Flight to *Futurity*. He should have perswaded himself, that the Humane, Candid, and Generous would never upbraid his Son for Faults he did not himself commit, even in the Height of Passion ; but on the contrary, with true Nobility of Soul, commiserate his Misfortunes. None but little groveling Souls can be guilty of such mean Actions, and Scandal from a base-minded Man is rather Praise than Infamy. But I doubt this was not the true Cause of the Compunction and Concern which (he said) he felt ; I rather apprehend that Conscience, Man's *faithful Monitor*, then muster'd before him the long, long Catalogue of Sins he had committed, and that his Soul was shuddered at the black Recital. For however we may flatter ourselves with Tranquility, whilst undetected in our Crimes, yet even in the Height of our Jollity, at our *Carousels* of Mirth and wanton Levity, when the brisk Goblet chaces round, and Laughter sits upon the unclouded Brow, yet then,

even then, corroding Care will steal unseen amidst our Sports, and twinge the guilty Heart.

Such (I believe) was the Concern (if he really felt any as he pretended) of this unhappy Man, yet even these Suggestions could hardly win him to the Thoughts of Death, and preparing for an *everlasting unknown State*; but as if infatuated to Life, and incapable of throwing it off, he was led to deceive himself with Hopes of it, even to the last Moment. But, alas! it was what he could not expect, and the most imprudent Thing he could be guilty of; therefore, with Christian Fortitude, he should have met his Misfortunes calmly, and with Christian Faith, Contrition, and Sorrow, endeavoured to *hope and stand fast in that Faith wherewith Christ had made him free*, and by an expiatory Sacrifice atone for his Transgressions, nor be again *enslaved with the Yoke of Bondage*.

After living two Years in *Poland-Street*, he removed into *Panton-Square*, and the greatest Harmony subsisted betwixt him and his Wife; nor was he guilty of any Misconduct, except his Profuseness in keeping a Chaise and Pair, three Saddle-Horses, and Servants equivalent, which indeed exceeded the Bounds of his Income. However, he never had been addicted to any Vice hitherto, and Extravagance was his only Fault; but now begins the long Train of Miseries, Cares, and Sorrows, which terminated in his forfeit Life.

Falling in Company accidentally with one *J— N—*, and who is generally known by the Title of Doctor *N—*, this Man being a Person of a very good Address, and a perfect Master of Cunning, by sly Insinuations soon made him believe him to be his sincere Friend, and
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that his open Expressions, and Professions of Friendship, were the real Sentiments of his Soul. This induced him to make him his Companion, and he, with (a pretended) unreserv'd Frankness, opened his Case to him, and made him Master of his most secret Circumstances. Acquainted thus with his Affairs, and finding he had no Money, *Parsons* generously offered him his House, and Share of his Fortune, tho' it was very small. By the artful Contrivances of *N——* he gained so far upon him as to persuade him to play, which, with a great deal of Argument, he did effect. Thus ushered into the most fashionable, and yet most shameful Vice in Nature, by the chief Eminary of Destruction, one may naturally suggest that he had no great Run of very good Luck ; for let him play ever so often, he was sure to lose very considerably, which he found afterwards was shared by *N——* and the Winner, who was sure to be some Gambler of *N——*'s Acquaintance, planted purposely to decoy the Unwary ; for *N——*, like all Gentlemen of his Profession, had no visible Way of subsisting, but by frequenting Gaming-Houses, Tennis-Courts, &c. there, with a Parcel of Rooks and Sharpers, his intimate Acquaintance, to cajole and cheat the Inexpert and Heedless of their Health, their Fortune, and their Credit. For what Tradesman will care to trust a Man, who, at one Venture, will risk his *All* with a common Trickster, and who is a frequent Companion of Knaves and Villains ?

Gaming is certainly the most abominable Vice on Earth, the grand Source of every Evil, and Spring from whence arises so many Murders and Robberies. 'Tis these pestiferous Houses which are the Nurseries, the Azylum of Thieves,

Thieves, and Pickpockets : Can any Thing be more despicable than the Character of a *Gamester* ? Is not he unworthy the Society of Mankind, since he has no Thoughts of *Right* or *Wrong* ; his Head is full of Blacks and Reds, and he would prefer the Preservation of the *Ace of Spades*, to the Life of the best Man beneath the Copes of Heaven. The Vice of Gaming has such an Effect upon the Passions, that Nature immediately starts from her Seat ; moral Honesty, and moral Conscience, may be Terms used, but never understood. The Gamester has no Compunction, no Remorse, Shame, or Humanity ; his *Conscience is seared with a red hot Iron*, and he boasts in his weak, blasphemous Exclamations, and vaunting in his Impiety, cries, *O my Gold ! I have no God but thee !* Are not such as these the very Bane of Mankind, and *worse than the Brutes that perish* ? A Fellow Creature's Misfortunes never move his obdurate Heart, and nothing can affect him but the Loss of Money ; and then indeed he is a dangerous Creature, his Eyes glare with vindictive Rage ; he curses not only Man but God, and wishes *Chaos was come again*. If he has no other Means of getting a Recruit, the Innocent must pay for his Guilt, and he commits Depredations upon the Goods (if not the Bodies) of others. Complaints for Restoration or Injury are vain. What Injury (he cries) do I do thee, is not Self-preservation Nature's eldest Law, and must I starve to see you enjoy a Competency ? No, Nature (at least his Nature) prompts, and I obey her Dictates ; 'tis fit Men who have Souls, (baseful Miscreant !) should have enough, and let the parsimonious Niggard toil for more to supply my gay Delights.

About

About this Time Mr. *Parsons* was honoured with a Lieutenancy, and the Regiment being ordered into *Flanders*, he was obliged to go with it. He still remained quite a Stranger to the Villainy of *N—*, and liking him as a facetious, agreeable Companion, took him Abroad with him, with a Servant to attend him ; little suspecting that this Vulture was preying upon his Vitals, sucking out his Heart's Blood, and undermining his Content and Happiness here, and for ever. His Extravagancy and the Itch he now had for Gaming, occasioned him frequently to borrow large Sums of Money upon Annuities, Mortgages, or otherwise ; and being press'd hard for Debts he had contracted in the Regiment, whilst Abroad, which he was entirely unable to pay, he obtained Leave to sell his Commission, that his Debts might be discharged, and his Creditors satisfied. Whether any such Thing was done let those speak who had the Management of the Affair ; but he believes very few of them were ever paid, and he never received a Farthing Overplus from the Sale of his Commission. *N—* still stuck fast to him, whilst he had any Thing to prey upon, and came back with him from *Flanders* to *England*. Upon his Arrival here, he found his Creditors so clamorous, as would not permit him a quiet Residence, at least with his Wife, with whom 'till now he had always lived in an amicable, harmonious Manner ; therefore, he was obliged to leave her, and seek for private Lodgings. Finding an Apartment to his entire Satisfaction, at the House of Mr. *T—*'s, in *Gough-Square* in *Fleet-Street*, he hired them in the Name of Capt. *Brown*, and pass'd as a single Gentleman in the Army, to prevent

prevent his being found out by Creditors, and being reluctantly drove from his peaceful Asylum. Nobody suspecting the Veracity of his Reports, treated him with the greatest Complaisance and Good-manners, and appearing always gay and genteel, presumed to pay his Addresses to the Gentleman's Daughter where he lodged; (as he falsely calls it, in an honourable Manner) whom he debauched, and by whom he has had two Children, and she is now in *Newgate* for Debt; he being really thought what he pretended to be, the young Lady's Father took very little Notice of his Addresses, imagining him to be a Man of Fortune and Honour.

Desirous to shield himself from the Importunities of his Creditors, which he thought he could not do long in that Situation, he sought some favourable Opportunity of evading their gentle Dunns. War being then declar'd with *France*, and he quite out of Employ, a lucky Occasion soon presented itself; therefore in Hopes of accumulating some Wealth, and recruiting his tatter'd Circumstances, in *June* 1745, he shipped himself on Board the *Dursley Galley* Privateer, Captain *Organ Furnell*, as Captain of *Marines*. Being at *Deal*, and having some Business on Shore, though apprehensive of meeting some of the *Catchpoles*, he determined nevertheless to go, and prepared himself to give them a *warm* Reception, should any such Thing happen. Agreeable to his Expectation, soon after he was landed upon *Deal-Beach*, he saw five or six Men make towards him, with none of the most promising Aspects in Nature, and who seemed to have no favourable Design in Agitation. Upon a nearer Approach he easily discovered who they were, and accordingly put himself in a defensive Posture, and

and on their attempting to seize him, (which one of the boldest did, notwithstanding the Warning he gave them) he immediately shot him in the Thigh; upon which they all desisted, and left him to go on Board again in quiet, assuring them, that if any other of them followed their Partner's Steps, he would shoot him dead; and the next Morning the Ship sailed on her Cruise.

After having been some Time at Sea, they fell in with a *French Privateer*, which they took, and carried into *Cork* in *Ireland*; and here he was taken ill, occasion'd by a Sickness amongst the Prisoners, therefore was sent on Shore and left behind, the *Privateer* sailing from *Cork* soon after. In a short Time, he had spent all the ready Money he had, and to replenish his Stock, drew three Bills upon some eminent Merchants in *London*, for which he received sixty Pounds; but a little Time before he thought they could have any Advice concerning them, took the Opportunity of coming to *England* in the *Louis Erasmus*, a *French Prize*, taken by some of the *Royal Family Privateers*, and in a few Days arrived safe at *Plymouth*. Here he continued some Time, but always keeping the best Company in Town, appearing gay, and frequenting the Assemblies, Coffee-Houses, and Billiard-Tables, his Stock began to diminish, always paying ready Money for what he bought. In this Situation he did not know how to act, but to have Recourse to his old Practice of *Drawing*; accordingly he applied directly to one Mr. P—— (who kept a House at *Plymouth*) and told him, he had Occasion for one hundred Pounds, for which he would give him a Draught upon *Alderman C——* in *London*,

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(being dress'd as an Officer, and always carrying his Commission with him, by Way of Confirmation) he had no Suspicion whatsoever, and very readily lent him the Money. Upon this *Parsons* bought a Horse of him, and riding out frequently, told Mr. P. — one Day, that he was going a little Way in the Country, and should stay two or three Days; but instead of returning to *Plymouth*, set out for *London*; after which, Mr. P. — never saw him till he was going to *Virginia*, when the Ship putting into *Catwater*, at *Plymouth*, to refit after a hard Gale of Wind, and Mr. P. — hearing he was there, went on Board to see him, at the same Time telling him he did the Trick dextrously, freely pardoned the Injury, and gave him a Guinea.

Soon after Mr. *Parsons* came to *London*, finding his Cash grow short, he began to meditate some new Way of Relief; as he had a teeming Brain, a Scheme which he thought easily practicable, he immediately went to a Tavern in the *Strand*, and ask'd the Landlord (whom he was well acquainted with) if he could not supply him with a Parson, for that there was a young Lady to whom he was to be instantly married. So Captain, says the Landlord, I doubt you have got some Heirefs, and therefore are desirous to marry her, that you may be hanged for the Theft. *Parsons* being eager to execute his Scheme, desir'd his Expedition, telling him Delays were desperate, and if he was acquainted with any Clergyman, to send for him directly. Accordingly a Clergyman was sent for and came, as did the Lady, but in going to perform the Ceremony, a Ring was deficient; *Parsons* called the Drawer, and desir'd him

him to step to a Jeweller's, and bid him bring some plain Gold Rings ; but the Clergyman told him he had a Friend of his, who lived at Hand, and if he pleased would send to him. Well Sir, (says *Parsons*) with all my Heart, do so, and as I think a trifling Present to my Wife would not be amiss, bid him bring some Diamond Rings likewise. The Clergyman sent, and the Rings were brought, when, after chusing a plain one, and also a Diamond one of considerable Value, *Parsons* pulled out a Draught, desiring the Jeweller to change it ; but recollecting, told the Clergyman, that when the Ceremony was over, he would satisfy him for the whole ; of which the Jeweller was quite satisfy'd, and went away. After a short Space his intended Bride withdrew out of the Chamber, to oblige Necessity, but staying longer than ordinary, he pretended to be uneasy, and made an Offer to ring ; but suddenly stopt, saying I'll go and see for her, somewhat may have happened. And lest the Clergyman should suspect any Thing, left his Hat behind him by Way of Blind ; but as soon as down Stairs, made the best of his Way to their appointed Rendezvous, and left the poor Clergyman in Jeopardy.

Soon after he was married, as is mentioned before, he entered into the Army, and had the Honour of his Majesty's Commission as Ensign in the Regiment of Foot, commanded by Colonel *Cholmondeley*, which Commission bore Date *January, 1741*. He continued in the Army in that Station for above three Years, and he says, that his Behaviour was such, as that in *March, 1744*, he was promoted to the Rank of a Lieutenant. He might have lived very well, had it not been for that Itch of Gaming, which generally left him Pennyless ;

tho' sometimes he got Money, he could not be content and make good Use of it, but still continued to play till he could get no more Money.

And here it may not be improper to take some Notice of that abominable, tho' fashionable Vice, of high Gaming, to which too many of our Nobility and Gentry are so excessively and scandalously addicted, to the utter Ruin of many of both Sexes, both as to this World, and it is to be feared, the next World too. This was the fatal Spring from whence the unhappy Mr. *Parsons* drew all his Misfortunes; this was the grand Source of all his Crimes, and the first Cause of his miserable and untimely End. What a shocking Thought is it, that a young Gentleman of his Birth, Education, and personal Accomplishments, should be thus unhappily, tho' most deservedly, cut off in the Flower of his Days? He who might have been an Honour to his Family, and the Delight of all his Acquaintance! And all thro' his unfortunate Inclination for Gaming; a Vice which has, perhaps, brought more young Men of gay Dispositions, and slender Fortunes, to the Gallows, than any other of those fashionable Methods, which idle and thoughtless People take to kill Time, that can be mentioned. This polite Diversion, or rather this wicked and foolish Practice of gaming High, so as to hurt one's own, or another Man's Fortune, embarrasses one's Circumstances, or destroys one's Peace of Mind; this is a Vice of such a peculiar Nature, that it seems to deprave and corrupt the Heart more than any other. It is a Kind of declaring War against all Mankind: The Gamester looks upon every Man that plays with him, as his Enemy, over whom he makes it his Business to take every Advantage, and if he ruins him, and leaves him without a Shilling

Shilling in the World, this is looked upon as nothing. The Gamester has no Bowels of Compassion; his Heart feels no Tenderness for any Man; Friends or Foes are all alike to him; he builds his Success upon their Misfortunes; his Avarice or Extravagance must be supplied; and to these every Thing, every tender or friendly Connexion, every social Tie, every virtuous and honourable Sentiment, must be sacrificed.—Of the Truth of this Observation, the Life of Mr. *Parsons* has been but one continued Evidence. As no Man was ever more fitly qualified by Nature, to impose upon, deceive, and abuse Mankind, than he was; so perhaps, among the numerous Tribe of gaming Miscreants that he has left behind him, (*till their Hour too shall come*) none ever shewed more Instances of a Heart steel'd and harden'd against the Checks of Conscience and common Humanity, than this young Man. For what but the blackest Ingratitude could be capable of using poor Mr. *St. J.*— in the base Manner that he did? His Behaviour towards this Gentleman deserves particular Notice here, among many other Instances which might be mentioned. The Story of Mr. *St. J.*— then, in few Words, is this:

During the late Rebellion, *Parsons*, who was a Lieutenant in one of his Majesty's Regiments of Foot, having involved himself, by his Extravagancies, in great Streights, and his usual Resource, the Gaming-table, failing him; he applied himself to Mr. *St. J.*—, a half-pay Officer: After acquainting this Gentleman with the bad State of his Circumstances, he added, that he knew no other Remedy than to go down into the Country, and join himself with the Rebels. His Friend,

Friend, like an honest and prudent Man, advised him by all Means not to embark in such a desperate Scheme; and in short, kindly and generously lent him forty Guineas (as our Information says) as a present Supply. — Soon after this, he went again to this same Gentleman, and acquainted him that some urgent Business, which he particularly mentioned (but whether real or pretended is uncertain) absolutely required his going into the Country. Whereupon this good-natur'd Friend freely proffered him the Use of his Horse, to save *Parsons* the Expence of hiring one. Accordingly, this ungrateful Wretch received the Horse, and directly went to *Smithfield* and sold him.

Having committed this base and ungenerous Action, how could he ever think of again looking his Friend in the Face? Not that he wanted Assurance enough, but it was not safe — He could not expect that this Usage would be tamely put up with; how then to avoid the Consequences was the Question, which this ungrateful Man at last determined thus. To be beforehand with the just Resentment of Mr. *St. J* —, and to put it out of that Gentleman's Power to call him to any Account, he had Recourse to the meanest, as well as the wicked Expedient, that any Man, except a Gamester, or Sharper (which certainly is the lowest and vilest Class of Thieves in the World, let their Appearance or Rank be what it will) could have thought of. In short, he gave in a false Information against his Friend and Benefactor, accusing him of a Design of going to join the Rebels; upon which poor Mr. *St. J* — was taken into Custody, and was a Prisoner for many Months; nor did he at last regain his Liberty without the Loss of his Half-pay, which on this Occasion was taken from him.

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The scandalous Manner in which Mr. *Parsons* used Mr. D—n, a Gentleman of considerable Fortune in *Ireland*, and another Gentleman of the same Name and Family, (by Profession a Surgeon) by causing them both to be taken into Custody, by Warrants from the Secretary of State, upon his own false Information, is too notorious to need any further Mention.

An Artifice of his, which is a very true Story, was when the Disturbance was in the North, in the Year 1745, he counterfeited a Draught on one of the Collectors of Excise for 500 *l.* as from his R—H—. The Collector was surprised at so large a Demand, not having near so large a Sum in his Custody. However, he got 50 *l.* from the Gentleman, with which *Parsons* marched off the Ground. Diverse other Tricks has he put upon People, which would take up too much Room to be inserted in this Pamphlet. The above are sufficient to shew what Sort of a Man he was, and what an ungrateful Return he has made for all the Advantages of Family, Education, and Fortune.

Sometime after this, finding himself destitute of Necessaries, and being in Company with a young Gentleman of the Army, who had on a new Suit of Cloaths, which pleased his Taste, had the Curiosity to enquire the Name of the Taylor, upon which he told him Mr. L—b was the Person who made those Cloaths, and assured him he was an honest Man, and if he wanted any would use him well.

This *Parsons* deemed as a lucky Hint, and strove to improve it; accordingly he went to Mr. L—b, telling him he was recommended by such a Gentleman (mentioning his Name) and as he was not engaged with a Taylor, would give him
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the Preference, adding, that his Name was *Brown*, that he was then an Officer in such a Regiment, but that a Captain's Commission in the Guards was at that Time making out for him, that he should have Occasion for some new Clothes, and that he might depend on prompt Payment.

Mr. *L—b* was highly pleased with the Hopes of such a Customer, and accordingly made several Suits of Cloaths for him, no Way doubting his ready Payment, which he always sent Home when finished, pursuant to *Parsons's* Directions. However, one Day Mr. *L—b* took it in his Head to carry Home his Bill, where he found the pretended Captain, with an Excuse, (which he seldom wanted) for Non-payment thereof immediately, and to apologize for his want of Cash at that Juncture. This gave Mr. *L—b* Room for Suspicion of his new Customer, wherefore he went to the *War-Office*, to enquire if any such Person as Mr. *Brown* had a Commission or not; and upon finding every Thing *verbatim* as *Parsons* had related, began to be somewhat easy. Being thus informed that a Commission was actually issuing for Mr. *Brown*, he remained quiet for some Time, but on making further Application for Money, found himself deceived; therefore exasperated to the highest Degree, he determined to seek a Remedy at Law, but unhappily laying his Action in the Name of *Brown*, he was Non-suited.

Drove pretty sharp, his Brain was at Work, when a Scheme jumped into his Head. He immediately drew a Draught upon Sir *J—H—* for *£100* and equipped in a very handsome riding Dress, went to the *Ram Inn* in *West-Smith-*
field; here he enquired for a very honest Porter, which being found, he sent him directly with a
Draught

Draught to receive the same, and bring the Money to him. But as *Parsons* had a great deal of Presence of Mind, he slipped out after the Porter, and followed him, (for says he) "if any Body comes out of the Shop with him back again, I am betrayed, if he comes alone he has received the Money," (and this Caution saved his Life. The Porter goes as directed, and carries the Draught to Sir J—, which he ordered one of his Clerks to pay, but the Clerk seemed very diffident, and notwithstanding he was twice ordered to pay the Amount, refused, giving very cogent Reasons for his Suspicion. Upon this Sir J— ordered a Coach, and putting himself and the Porter therein, drove away to *Smithfield*, but *Parsons*, who was planted in a proper Place, saw the whole Scene, and went another Way, leaving Sir J— to pay the Coach-hire, and come Home as he went.

Being frustrated in this Project, he was again put to his Wits, and obliged to trust to his *Captainship*, as a Screen to his Knavery. He therefore went one Day to Mrs. *Bottomley*, a Hatter, near *St. George's Church*, telling her that he had Orders to furnish the Regiment he belonged to (then Abroad) with Hats, and desired she would let him have a Sample. This Mrs. *Bottomley* did, and delivered the Hats accordingly, when *Parsons* went to several Hatters to dispose of them again; alledging, that he had contracted with a Hatter to supply a Regiment with Hats, which not being done to the Time appointed, were returned upon his Hands, and he would sell them at some Loss. He tried several Hatters, who refused the Purchase, but at last effected it with some Difficulty, and sold them for 80*l.* though the Amount of the Hats

as bought of Mrs. *Bottomley*, came to above double that Sum.

Now finding his Pranks had grown very atrocious, insomuch that he could scarce live quietly, and that his Creditors were in daily Pursuit of him, he framed a Scheme to be siezed as a disaffected Person, and was accordingly taken into Custody, and detained in the Hands of a Messenger about 18 Months, where he lived free and peaceable; unembarrassed with the Clamours of dunning Creditors, and free from any Incumbrances. During his Confinement here, some Persons promised get him some genteel Place, as a Reward for his Information against Captain *St. J—*; but finding their Promises quite windy, upon his Release, to shun his Creditors, he was obliged to go to *Holland*. He stayed in *Holland* as long as his Cash would conveniently let him, but finding it daily decrease, he was obliged to come back to *England*, and live on the Produce of his fertile Imagination. Soon after his Arrival he went to a *Masquerade*, the Nursery of Vice and Immorality, the Bane of Mankind, that Hellebore to social Friendship Community, and the glaring Noon-day, Shame of *England*. Here, like a losing Gamester, he boldly ventured his little *All*, and Fortune smiling on him that Night, he won a Sufficiency to keep him genteely some Months, when his Stock decreasing, he wrote several pressing Letters to his Brother-in-Law, desiring he would use his Endeavours with the *East-India* Company, to procure some Place in their Land Service. But his Letters met with a very cold Reception, for notwithstanding his Brother's Interest was great, yet all his Remonstrances had no Effect, and he applied several Times to no Purpose. At last he wrote

wrote a very pressing Letter, earnestly craving his Assistance, to enable him to support Nature; when his Brother sent him Word to call on Mr. L— at Number 4, in *King's-Bench Walks*, in the *Temple*. *Parsons* immediately went, full of sanguine Expectations that his Brother's Heart had relented, and that he had sent him some comfortable Supply. When he came there, Mr. L— told him, he had received a Letter from his Brother, the Contents of which were to the following Purport, viz.

Mr. L—,

I Have received several Letters from Mr. *William Parsons*, my unhappy Brother-in-Law, begging Relief; as I have frequent Letters of this Sort, I have one Way of getting rid of them all, by giving the Suppliant a Guinea. Therefore, if he is in such Want as he pretends to be, I beg you will supply him with the above Sum, and when I see you, will repay it, &c. at the same Time giving him to understand, that as it was the first, so it would be the last.

Finding all Hopes of Assistance from his Brother, vain, and drove almost to Despair, he did not know what to do. When fatally for him, a MASQUERADE happened to be at *Ranelagh*, he thought of the following Expedient in order to win some Money, and having borrowed Money to gain Admittance, he drew a Note, with which he play'd for small Sums, and being on the losing Strain, desired the Person to change him the same; but the Person being unable or unwilling, he permitted him to go, on engaging his Honour to leave the Money for him at a certain Place. However, going to offer the said Note for Payment a Day or two after,

he was apprehended, and committed to *Wood-Street Compter*. During his Seclusion there, which was from *August* to *March*, he wrote the two following Letters to his Father and Wife; viz.

Wood-Street Compter, Aug. 17, 1748.

Honour'd Sir,

AFTER so profligate and infamous a Life as I have led, I hardly dare to put Pen to Paper to intercede with you for Forgiveness; but by being sincerely penitent of my many and enormous Crimes, which I am sincerely from the Bottom of my Heart, I hope to obtain Pardon of my heavenly Father in the World to come; so, by the same Repentance I hope to obtain Forgiveness of my terrestrial Parent (and my much-injur'd Wife.) Certain it is, I am undeserving the minutest Charity from any of my Relations, and in a more especial Manner from you, who I have so greatly and so oft' offended. Notwithstanding my past mis-spent Life, your Goodness is so manifest to me in the Letter and Support you sent me by Mr. B——, that, during the short Time the Law allows me in this World, (through a long and severe Imprisonment) I shall, in the most grateful and humble Manner, be truly thankful for your Tenderness and Compassion towards me.

I am, S I R,

(Tho' heretofore a Profligate)

Now your sincerely penitent

And unhappy Son,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

To

To my much-injured Wife.

Wood Street Compter, Aug. 29, 1748.

HAD I but heretofore been as thoroughly sensible of my profligate and mis-spent Life as now, I need not have dated a Letter to you from this dismal Place. The Reflections which I now make on my past Crimes make me in a Manner distracted, and none disturb my Peace of Mind more, than the Barbarities and unspeakable Injuries you have undeservedly met with from me; I am, believe me, as sincerely penitent for my ill Usage towards you, and for my past enormous Crimes, as it is possible for Man to be; by which Repentance I hope to obtain Mercy in the World to come, and Forgiveness from you. I was once esteemed by you as a sincerely affectionate Husband, and now beg you will look on me, during the short Time I have to live, to be, as I subscribe myself,

Your sincerely penitent Husband,

In deep Affliction,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

Mr. Parsons was moved by *Habeas Corpus* from *Wood-Street Compter* to *Maidstone*, in order to take his Trial at the ensuing *Lent Assizes* at *Rochester*. When he came to *Maidstone*, being well recommended by the Gentleman who came thither with him, and appearing as a Gentleman, Mr. Carey (the Keeper) commiserated him, and used him extremely well, suffering him to board with him, and to be in his own Apartment

ment in the Day-time ; but his curst Ingratitude made him use this Man ill, by contriving what would have been his Ruin, had it taken Effect. *Parsons* being allowed these Privileges, thought to make use of them to forward his Liberty, and lying with a Person who was a Smuggler, he communicated his Intention to him, telling him if he coincided therewith, they might easily escape not only themselves, but also free all their Fellow-Prisoners : However, *Parsons* was here mistaken, for his Confident blushing at his flagitious Ingratitude, then prudently smother'd his Intent, and jump'd into the Scheme ; on the Morrow he inform'd Mr. *Carey*, who doubted the Truth of it ; but being inform'd, that if he would come softly in the Night at such a Time, he should hear the whole Affair discussed, Mr. *Carey* went according to the Time, and was amazed to find it true, wherefore the next Day he stripped *Parsons* of his Favour, and kept him under greater Restraint.

In *September* following, he was shipp'd for Transportation, on Board the *Thames*, Capt. *Dobbins*, bound to *Maryland*, in Company with about 173 Convicts, 50 of which died in their Passage ; and when about 100 Leagues West of the Land's End, one Night, in a hard Gale of Wind, they carried away their Main-Mast within three or four Feet of the Deck, sprung their Fore-Top-Mast, and carried away their Mizzen-Mast ; and had they not cut away all their Main-Rigging, must inevitably have been lost. This obliged them to put into *Cattwater* at *Plymouth* to refit, which being done in a few Days, they proceeded on their Voyage ; in about six Weeks got within the Capes of *Virginia*, and on the 30th of *November*, 1749, he was landed at *Annapolis*

polis in *Maryland*. After his Arrival here, he continued as a common Slave about 7 Weeks, when Lord F——, who is Proprietary Governor of a large Tract of Land in *Virginia*, having heard some Account of him, begun to compassionate his Hardships, received him into his House, treated him with great Regard and Humanity, and allowed him a Horse to ride.

But *Virginia* illy suiting with Mr. *Parsons's* Passions, he could not relish so quiet a Solitude, so calm a Retirement, wherefore he determined to quit the Country; accordingly he went off one Day with this Horse Lord F—— allow'd him, and went away into the Country; where, about a Fortnight before he left *Virginia*, he robb'd a Gentleman on Horseback of five Pistoles, one Moidore, and ten Dollars. However, this being a small Sum, about 11 Days after he met a Gentleman and Lady in a Chaise, with a Negroe Servant, from whom he took about 11 Guineas *Sterling*, and three Dollars; but imagining the Country would be too hot for him, he made for *Powtomack River*, where he found a Ship just ready to depart; where selling his Horse, and providing for his Voyage, he embarked, and after a Passage of three Weeks and four Days, arrived safe at *Whitehaven* in the North of *England*.

Once more in *England*, he was obliged to try his Genius for a Maintenance, when feigning a Letter that his Father was dead, and he was come to *England* to take Possession of a large Estate, he prevail'd with a Merchant at *Whitehaven* to let him have 75*l.* giving him a Draught for the same on a Banker in *London*. Having provided himself with Necessaries here, he set out for *London*, where on his Arrival he frequented

quented his old Haunts, such as Gaming-Tables, Bawdy-Houses, &c. and as this diminished his Stock, he at last determin'd to find some Method of Redress. Sick of his bare-spun Forgeries, he had no Means but the Road left for Subsistence, wherefore in *August* last he sat out, and robb'd two Gentlemen in a Post-Chaise, about Eleven o' Clock at Night, upon *Hounslow-Heath*, of five Guineas and eight Shillings; from one he took his Watch, which he pledg'd the first Thing he did the next Morning, at a Pawnbroker's in *Piccadilly*, for 1 l. 11 s. 6 d. for he always chose to rob in the Night, that in Case of Plunder, he might dispose of the Booty the next Day, before the Persons robb'd could have an Opportunity of advertising them.

A few Days after this he robb'd a Gentleman on Horseback, a little on t'other Side *Turnham Green*, about Twelve at Night, of thirty Shillings, and a plain Gold Ring. The Gentleman begg'd hard for the Ring, telling him it was his Wife's Wedding-Ring; which *Parsons* return'd, and ask'd him if he had any more Money; but the Gentleman assuring him he had not, *Parsons* gave him five Shillings, telling him it was errant Necessity that urg'd him to this for a Subsistence; whereupon they shook Hands, and parted.

Soon after this he sat out again, and about 11 at Night stopp'd a Coach and Four, between the *Halfway-House* and *Kensington-Gore*; but hearing some People coming up, he rode off towards *Hounslow*, and overtaking a Country Farmer, robbed him of one 36 Shillings Piece, and 10 Shillings in Silver, and then made for *Colnbrook*. Going thither, he met with a Gentleman's Servant, (as he told him he was) whom he robb'd of a Silver Watch and Chain, and two Guineas and an Half, and then made towards *Windsor*; from whence

whence he came to *London*, and on the Morrow-Morning sold the Watch and Chain to a Silver-smith in *Cheapside*, for two Pounds eight Shillings.

About the 17th or 18th of *August*, at 11 at Night, he robb'd two Gentlemen of seven Guineas and some Silver, just at the Entrance of *Hounslow-Heath*; from one of them he took a very handsome Silver Snuff-box, and rode then immediately for *London*, and the next Day sold the Snuff-box to a Jew in *Duke's Place*.

One Evening, as he was going Home to his Lodgings near *Hyde-Park-Corner*, he overtook a Gentleman's Servant in *Piccadilly*, and falling into Discourse with him, found, that the *Sunday* Morning following he was to go out of Town very early, with a Portmanteau of his Master's, in which was Cash, and some Notes, sewed in the Body of a Waistcoat, to the Amount of a very large Sum (as the Servant told him), how true it was he could not answer, but determined to rob him of the Portmanteau. Accordingly, on the *Sunday* Morning (fatal Adventure to him) he sat out early, and as the Servant was to go by *Windsor*, determined to way-lay him. It happen'd that Mr. *Fuller*, his former Prosecutor, and Mr. *Best*, were going a Journey, whom *Parsons* overtook on *Turnham-Green*. As soon as they saw him they knew him, having being been at his Trial at *Rocheſter*. They took very little Notice of him at first, but coming pretty near them, and dreading some evil Conſequences, they deſir'd he would keep off, not knowing what were his Deſigns. Beſides, it was natural for a Man to be intimidated at the Sight of a Perſon he had proſecuted a little while before, and who he imagined was in a diſtant World. However, *Parſons* kept near them, ſometimes before, and ſome-

times behind, till they came very near to *Hounslow*; when a Person on Horseback came up, and they all went into the Town together.

Being got into the Town, Mr. *Best* and Mr. *Fuller* got out of the Chaise, insisting upon *Parsons* surrendering himself, and submitting to their Mercy, or they would raise the Town upon him. Upon this, *Parsons* alighted from his Horse, and in a confus'd, supplicating Manner, begg'd their Mercy, and to speak with them in private. Immediately they then went into a Room by themselves, and as he thought Resistance vain, freely delivered his Pistols, charg'd and prim'd, and confided to their Lenity. But on Mr. *Day* (the Master of the *Rose and Crown* at *Hounslow*) observing that *Parsons* exactly answer'd the Description given of a Highwayman, who at that Time infested the Road, the Gentlemen thought proper not to let him go, in Behalf of the Publick; whereupon a Constable was sent for, who, upon searching his Pockets, found a Horn of Gunpowder, and some Balls. And as Justice demands that we should preserve the Property of each other, as well as our own, no one will deny, but that such securing of Mr. *Parsons* was incumbent on Mr. *Fuller*, and absolutely necessary for the Safety and Emolument of the Community.

Upon being carried before a Justice of the Peace, he pleaded very much for Mercy, and urged his Family, which he hop'd would prove in his Favour; but upon Examination, he was committed to *Newgate*. His Behaviour whilst in Confinement was not altogether suitable to a Man in his Circumstances, just hovering on the Verge of Life; for having unhappily imbib'd a Passion, it prov'd eradicable, and greatly hinder'd his

his Preparation for a dread ETERNITY. He had always strong Hopes within himself of a Reprieve, and vainly flatter'd himself with such Expectations, and even deceived himself to the very last Minute. However, he paid the Debt due to Nature and to Justice, the 11th of *February*, 1750, pursuant to the Sentence pronounc'd against him at *Justice-Hall*, in the *Old Bailey*.

From such Scenes as these, how necessary is it that every young Man should endeavour to guard against splitting on this fatal Rock of Extravagance, and to warn them to adhere to the old *English* Proverb, *Never to go beyond their LAST*; and had this unhappy Gentleman observed that Mediocrity, he had never suffered an ignominious Fate, but might have lived a Comfort to his Family, and an Ornament to Mankind. These giddy Sallies of heated Youth hurry them on blindfold to the Gulph of Perdition, and from hence they date the Birth of every Calamity they suffer; for could they once be brought to curb their licentious Passion, and keep them under the Governance of Reason, they would experience the Sweets, and own there was no true Felicity, no solid Comfort, but in a Life of Religion and Virtue.



A N
A P P E N D I X
T O T H E
Life of WILLIAM PARSONS,
CONTAINING
Copies of a Number of Letters, wrote by
him, to several Persons, together with
Answers, &c.

*The following Letter was wrote by Mr. Parsons,
soon after his Commitment to Newgate, to Mr.
Fuller, the Gentleman who apprehended him.*

S I R,

A N entire Reliance on your Goodness and Humanity is the only Apology I can make for this Freedom, — upon which Presumption I beg Leave to address you, and flatter myself, that when the unhappy becomes a Suitor for Mercy, any Solicitation in such Extremity, will be the readier dispensed with.

I presume there's now no Occasion to acquaint you of my melancholy Situation, and the unhappy Consequences attending it: You are the Person, who has unluckily involved me in it, and
from

from whom I hope for Mercy; tho' vain and presumptuous my Expectation! something tells me it must come from you, or I am undone. As an Alleviation of my Crime I beg leave to give you the most solemn Assurance, that when I met you I had no other Intention than to sue for your Favour; for I well knew the dreadful Consequence of appearing in your Sight, and therefore designed to cast myself on your Goodness, as on a Gentleman, who would take no Pleasure in the Destruction of any unfortunate Man. It is now past, but far be it from me to accuse you of Injustice, who has so deservedly brought me to this Misery: There is a certain over-ruling Providence that governs all our Actions, and the Almighty has been pleased thus to execute his Vengeance on an Offender; such am I, but withall, I hope, a sincere Penitent;—one who now sees the Error of his Ways, and longs for a Continuance of Life to reform it; on other Conditions I despise it: But, Oh! when I consider seriously of an Hereafter, the Prospect amazes—I tremble and despair—I am loth to take Leave of this World, till I am better prepared for a happy Reception in the next. Surely the Almighty has not withdrawn his Grace from me! If not, May not a bad Man become good? These are my Hopes; that is my firm Reliance. Granting this, is it not Humanity, nay, infinite Charity, to preserve a Life, sought only for that End? Certainly it is, and God will reward the meritorious Act. Dear Sir, I pray let these Reflections have some Influence on you; and for Mercy, if you are obliged to prosecute me, intercede for my Life to the Court, when I am cast. Your extensive Interest, Character, and Power, will have so much Weight, that will
in

in the highest Degree induce them to shew Clemency. For an Act of that abundant Good-nature, Words would be but poor to express my joyful Thanks: None but a compassionate Breast can conceive the Sentiments of Gratitude, that would spring from a Heart so tenderly obliged; and in the End, such extreme Humanity will lead to a Virtue, which in this World must be its own Reward, while it still acquires new Glories to carry to that celestial Mansion, where the Good and Virtuous shall be crowned with eternal Splendour, by the Redeemer of Man, the bright Fountain of Mercy and Compassion. To whom, while he grants me Breath, Prayers shall be incessantly offered for your Preservation and Happiness, by,

S I R,

Your afflicted humble Servant,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

The World speaks you humane and charitable; if, therefore, Good-nature induces you to shew Pity on me, I request you'll please to importune that Gentleman, who accompanied you, to Secrecy. I am a perfect Stranger to him, neither have I committed any base Act since my Return, to urge him or you to Severity; but if 'tis thought my Crime is of that deep Dye, that nothing less than Blood must make Atonement, may Heaven have Mercy upon me.

Copy

*Copy of a Letter from Parsons to his Brother and Sister.**My dear Brother and Sister,*

THAT after what is past I dare address you, nothing but my extreme Affliction, and entire Reliance on your Goodness and Humanity compels me to: Do not, therefore be displeased, that an unhappy Wretch presumes so far on your Good-nature,—but with Pity, and Charity, behold me supplicating Mercy; and may the Almighty give you such a Tenderness and Meltingness of Heart, that you may be deeply affected with my Misery and Calamity: That I deserve Punishment for my Offences to God, I acknowledge; I have often provoked his Indignation, and his Justice has again overtaken me; a Piece of great Imprudence occasioned my last Misfortune, for instead of being elsewhere, pursuant to my Sentence, I was last *Sunday* unluckily met and apprehended by my former Prosecutor (*Mr. Fuller*) who has made Information of my returning from Transportation, and thereupon committed me to this most melancholy Place, from whence I have scarce the least Hopes of Release, till my poor Life answers for the dreadful Consequence. I accuse him not of Injustice, who has brought me to this Misery; so my bad Fortune has ordained. There is a certain overruling Providence that governs all our Actions, and the Almighty has been pleased thus to execute his Vengeance on an Offender; such am I, but withall, I hope, a sincere Penitent—one who now sees the Error of his Ways, and longs for a Continuance of Life to reform it—For, Oh! when I consider seriously of an Hereafter, the Prospect

Prospect amazes me—I tremble and despair—I am loth to take Leave of this World 'till I am better prepared for a happy Reception in the next. Surely the Almighty has not withdrawn his Grace from me! If not, May not a bad Man become good? These are my Hopes; that is my firm Reliance. Granting this, is it not Humanity, nay, infinite Charity, to preserve a Life sought only for that End? Certainly it is, and God will reward the meritorious Act.

Dear Brother and Sister, I pray let these Reflections have some Influence on you, and for Mercy's Sake (if not for your own Sake, to prevent the Shame and Disgrace that must inevitably ensue by my Ignominy on an innocent Family) intercede for me and use your best Interest in my Favour with Mr. *Honeywood*, whose deserved Character as well as Interest is established, and the World speaks both he and Mr. *Fuller* humane and charitable. If you will be so good as to apply to him, it will be the Effect of a truly good-natur'd Disposition, and for which you shall for ever have my most unfeign'd Thanks——Poor Return for an Act of such uncommon Tenderness! But 'tis all I have left to give, or by which I can even hope to repay that, or the many other Obligations you have conferr'd on me. I believe you expect nothing else, for you delight in Acts of such Humanity; and tho' you suffer Loss and Inconvenience by it, tho' you sacrifice Part of your own Ease, forego some inferior Satisfaction, and abate something in Point of Interest and Fortune; yet I hope Compassion (which I fear I do not merit) will prevail on you to over-rule all these Considerations, and prompt you to assist a destitute, unhappy Wretch, immers'd in the deepest Mis-

Misfortune, and in Want of a charitable Hand to raise him. I have Thoughts on my Trial to plead my Guilt, and rely on the Mercy of the Court; then when I am cast, and my poor Life expiring, I shall wait for some merciful Heart to sue for Pardon; tho' vain and presumptuous my Expectation, something tells me it must be from you, or I'm undone.

I can say no more, my Heart is full of Sorrow, and Contrition: If 'tis the Almighty's Will that I must die, I patiently submit to my Fate, and hope that Repentance will in the End work out my Salvation——May the Almighty shower down Blessings on you and yours, may you be happy in this World, and may you enjoy perfect Felicity in the next, such as is prepared for the Good and Merciful, is the fervent Prayer of

The lost, undone,

Newgate,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

To add to my Misfortunes, I am without a Penny to support me, and threatened, for the Want of what is not in my Power to give, to be turned down to the common Side of the Jail, among Wretches who have no Thought of God or their own Salvation. I hope the Almighty will inspire you with Sentiments of Compassion towards me, and to that End induce you to remit me somewhat to sustain Life under such melancholy and distress'd Circumstances.

H.

A Lett.

*A Letter from Parsons to a noble Earl, intreating
his Interest to save his Life.*

My Lord,

CONSCIOUS Shame for my past Offences, and Confusion of Thoughts in being thus constrain'd to trouble your Lordship's Goodness, and seek your Protection, make my Mind a State of Anarchy, and that at a Juncture when it should be most compos'd, serene, and tranquil.

There is something, my Lord, uncommonly shocking in the Ignominy of my approaching Fate, and the Apprehension of being expos'd a common Spectacle of Reproach and Infamy, to an illiterate, senseless Mob, intimidates me beyond Expression, and divests my Soul of every animating Faculty.

In the very Bloom of Life, and the Vigour of Health and Strength, when my Blood flows high in Youth, and my Nerves are yet unstrung, to be hurried from Earth into an unfathomable Eternity, is dreadful, is tremendous! The Reflection of my condescending to the Commission of such enormous Crimes, and flying in the Face of Equity, Justice, Moral Honesty, and Moral Conscience, dyes my Cheeks with crimson Stains, and swells my Breast with Sighs. But, my Lord, Perfection is quite inconsistent with our Nature, and as a repentant Offender is sure to find Mercy at the Throne of Grace, may we not hope for it from our Creator's Vicegerent. Contrition and Penitence are the only Means left me of expiating my Guilt,
and

and if the most unfeigned Sorrow for my past Crimes is any Atonement, I may then hope for Pity and Pardon.

To a noble Mind, my Lord, nothing is so satisfactory, so gratefully pleasing, as frequent Opportunities of doing Good, even tho' the unworthy Objects of their Favour are barren in Return. And 'tis under Sanction of these flutulent Hopes, that I (who have unhappily forfeited all Claim to Merit) now presume to address your Lordship, and prostrate on my Knees supplicate your generous Interposition, in Favour of a wretched Victim to offended Justice, that you will endeavour to deprecate the Wrath of offended Majesty, by shielding me from impending Fate.

An insupportable Concussion of Grief, Shame, and Sorrow, almost buries my Soul in a supine Apathy, and drives me to Melancholy; for where can I fly for Succour, or Assistance? Where, but to your Lordship's Humanity, and illemitable Compassion? Forgive me, then, my Lord, this Presumption; and tho' my Faults are atrocious, let Christianity excite your Pity, and shelter me from Death, from Shame, from everlasting Infamy!

My Afflictions, my Lord, and the Consideration of my hastening Doom, create inexpressive Grief, which choaks up Expression, and will scarce permit me to write; yet on my Knees I once more crave your bounteous Protection to save a Life, whose every Hour (should he be so happy to be spared) shall be spent in endeavouring to deserve such Mercy, in unfeigned Prayers for my generous Preserver, and

ardent Desires of evincing how strictly grateful I shall always strive to approve myself,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most devoted,

Most obedient, tho' most

Unhappy, humble Servant,

Newgate, Jan.

11, 1750-1.

WILLIAM PARSONS.

*A Letter from Sir William Parsons to a Friend,
relating to his Son.*

October the 10th, 1750.

Dear Brewerton,

FROM the Letter I received from my Son, I was in Hopes that he would have at last made a good Use of that little Time which I have been so successful as to obtain for him, in order that he might be the better prepared for the other World, before he leaves this; but instead of that, I have the Unhappiness to hear that he makes a very bad Use of the short Season that is most kindly allotted him for that Purpose; and seems to look upon this short Respite as an earnest of a Reprieve, which I assure you gives me more Concern, than even the Thoughts of that shameful Death he must certainly suffer when the King returns. For the utmost Favour I have been able to obtain of my Friends from the Regency, is really no more than this; that
so

so long as they continue Regents, they will defer recalling him to his former Sentence, but as soon as the King returns, that must be; and then 'tis their firm Opinion, that there will be no Possibility of obtaining any farther Favour, and that it will be to no Manner of Purpose to ask it. I therefore most earnestly desire that you will endeavour all you possibly can to convince him of this Truth; for my Peace of Mind, and perhaps too his Eternal Salvation, depends on it. He must die soon after the King's Return, so I hope none of his Friends will be so foolishly compassionate, as to give him at this Time any Relief from the Severities of a Dungeon, which are wisely designed as a Means to make such as are in his Circumstances seriously reflect on their past Conduct, and of that most terrible Sentence which in the other World will be passed upon such as neglect to make a good Use of that Opportunity, which is in Mercy allotted them for their Repentance in this. If you can get any truly pious Clergyman, that does not commonly attend the Jails, that will have so much Compassion for this poor Soul, as to endeavour to bring him to a true Sense of his past Offences, I shall most thankfully acknowledge the Favour to him, after my Son is no more. As for my Forgiveness, if it will give him any Satisfaction, you may assure him of it, and also my hearty Prayers for his Repentance. I am so full with Grief I can say no more, but that

I am,

Dear Brewerton,

Most Sincerely Yours,

W. PARSONS.

Parsons's

Parsons's Letter to his Father, after reading the former.

London, Octob. 23, 1750.

Hon. S I R,

YOUR's of the 10th Current to Mr. B.— has reached me, the Contents of which I have duly noted, and beg your Acceptance of my sincere Thanks for your kind Forgiveness, which, in my present Situation, affords me real Satisfaction. However flagrant have been my Follies, yet 'tis more than cruel for any malevolent Person to endeavour, by base Aspersions, and scandalous Misrepresentations, to alienate your Affection for an unhappy Son, who, in his present penurious Circumstances, rather needs an Encrease of parental Love; and I could wish, Sir, that you would rather banish Credulity, than cherish that Vulture, which will ever prey upon your Peace.

There are some People of such a baseful; malignant Disposition, as to be always uneasy, unless they are sowing the Seeds of Sedition, and raising Feuds and Animosities; these *Egyptian* Plagues are the worst of Evils, and I should be extremely sorry to find, that you would sooner credit the licentious Tongue of Calumny, than the Assertions of one in my calamitous Conditions. Here Misery reigns in all its dreadful Splendor, and nothing is to be seen but a most hideous Night-piece. The Athletic is hurried into the Tomb in the Prime of his Age, and Justice, offended Justice, with a stern Severity, demands the Victim; yet how gloomy is the Prospect, how dismal the Scene, which displays

displays this Evil, followed by a more tremendous Group! Care, Pain, Malady, Hunger, Nakedness, and Cold. Consider, Sir, this shocking, yet too similar Portrait, and let Nature (kind Mother) plead in Behalf of an offended Son! With conscious Shame I own my Follies, but can nothing atone for them but Life? Are my Faults inexpiable? And have the cruel Sisters decreed to cut my Thread? Must I be cropt, like a just opening Flower, e're I have tasted the Sun's enlivening Heat? Can nothing mitigate my Offence, and is my Fate irreversibile?

I would, Sir, that you should maintain those favourable Sentiments of me, you say my last influenced you to cherish; I hope the Ligatures of Nature are not entirely broke, and that you will condescend to alleviate in some Measure the pungent Miseries I now endure. If you call the Humanity of any Friend, who relieves my Distress by trivial Succour, a foolish Compassion, I am very sorry; and though the Severities of a Dungeon may be designed (wisely) to awaken Criminals to a due Sense of their Offences, and the Thoughts of future Existence; yet, if People should begin to divest themselves of Humanity; and the common Ties essential to the well-ordering of the World, and the Harmony of Mankind, such Scenes of Distress would rather damp the Spirits, and plunge us in Despair, or else be Motives to Atheism, and even prevail on Men to believe no superintendent and all-sufficient Power to preside over the Affairs of the World; and consequently to think of a State of Annihilation. From these Considerations, I hope it will evidently appear, that my Thoughts are not so volatile and unsteady, as some would endeavour to make you believe; nor should we always judge
of

of Men or Things by outward Appearances; we should maturely weigh, and consider the undue Media through which Men's Actions may appear to us; and suspend our Decision 'till we have made a more strict and accurate Search into them, not peremptorily determine, 'till we had examined into the secret Springs and Motives of their Proceedings.

However readily we may allow that most Men are in Masquerade, and veil their Deeds, however black they are, under the specious Cloak of Friendship; yet no one is more difficult to unravel than the Schemes of a seasoned Villain, couched beneath the Disguise of unbiaſſed Amity; but could we, as *Horace* ſays,

*Detrahere et pellem, nitidus quæ quisque per ora
Cederet; —*

how hideous would he appear to an honeſt Mind; and how deſpicable muſt that Man be, whoſe Being or Support is founded on the Ruin of others, nay perhaps his inviolable Friends?

That any of my Acquaintance have buoyed me up with imaginary Hopes of a Reprieve, is falſe and groundleſs, ſince I am ſenſible they can't answer for the King's Determination; yet am ſorry to find by your Letter that I muſt inevitably die. 'Tis a tremendous Expreſſion, more when aggravated by ſuch ſhocking Appendages as ſeem to await my Doom; yet "*Who ſhall circumscribe the Theatre, upon which an omnipotent Goodneſs may think proper to diſplay itſelf?*" Who ſhall preſume to ſet Bounds to "*infinite Power, actuated by infinite Benevo-*" "*lence?*" May not I then dare to hope, without being criminal, and yet endeavour to fit myſelf

myself for a *fatal Exit*? You urge me, Sir, with some Reluctance to argue on a Theme not altogether the most agreeable in Nature, yet hope my wretched Circumstances will at least influence you to send me some Relielf in my extreme Distress, assuring you I have scarce a Sufficiency to support Life; and indeed my present Condition makes it an irksome Load.

The Ties of Blood I hope will prove a sufficient Apology for this Request, and excite your Compassion and Assistance, assuring you my present Exigencies make it almost Misery to be born; enable me then by kind Succour to drag out this *Tedium Vita*, in a Manner less burthensome than it now is, and by a generous Paternal Redress, shelter me from the Inclemencies of Cold, and the terrible Attacks of Hunger, and as you have vouchsafed me Pardon, stretch out the Hand of Humanity to ease my Sorrows. I would proceed, but Grief prevents my labouring Thoughts, and choaks Expression, yet permit me to assure you I remain,

Hon. S I R,

Your most affectionate,

Dutiful and contrite Son,

WILL. PARSONS.

Another Letter from Sir William Parsons to his Son.

I Have used my utmost Endeavour with a noble Duke, who is greatly my Friend, in order to save your Life; but as I find that
I is

is impossible, I think it my Duty (however distracting it is for me to write on this Subject) to let you know it immediately, that you may not deceive yourself with the Hopes of Life, but instantly endeavour to make the best Use of the short Time which is allotted you in this World, in Order to prepare for that which is eternal. I need not write my Name, for you know the Hand

Of your even yet affectionate.

Jan. 23d.

Parsons's Answer to the Former.

Honour'd Sir,

YOUR's of the 23d Current reach'd me Yesterday, the Contents of which I have very seriously consider'd; and though nameless, yet the Characters are too well known to be ignorant from what kind Hand it came. Believe me, Sir, unfeignedly thankful for your humane Endeavours to save my Life, which is still a greater and more unmerited Mark of your paternal Regard; but as I really don't flatter myself with Hopes of its Prolongation, endeavour all I am able to fit myself (I hope) for an *awful*, yet *happy* Eternity.

Qui pœnitet peccasse, pœne est innocens,

He who sins and repents, is free from Punishment,

Is a Maxim which has long been cherished, and in such Case, I may dare to hope, that through the mediatorial Sacrifice of a *Blessed Redeemer*, I shall

shall meet Forgiveness at the *Throne of Mercy*. He assures us, that a willing Mind is always accepted; and as I am persuaded I must appear at the *Judgment-Seat of Christ*, so through expiatory Contrition I hope to receive ample Pardon; for "Who shall presume to set Bounds to *infinite Power*, actuated by *Infinite Benevolence*? "Who shall circumscribe the *Theatre* upon which an *omnipotent Goodness* may think proper to display itself? 'Tis impossible that *finite Minds* can comprehend the *Power of Infinity*, how then can *Omnipotence* come within the *Scope of their Jurisdiction*?"

I am thoroughly convinced of my Errors, and heartily sorry for my past Misconduct; however, my present Sufferings are sufficient Punishment, I hope, to expugn my Guilt. If, as I am willing to think, your wonted Affection still continues, I dare believe in my Situation you would not willingly enhance my Afflictions by any aggravating Circumstances, or retrospect upon my Disobedience.

My Mind, I confess, is much more tranquil since your kind Pardon and Reconciliation than before; and tho' I am indeed no Ways anxious after Life, for the bare Sake of *living*, yet it would have been greatly satisfactory to have been furnish'd with Opportunities of making you Amends for the Uneasiness and Concern I have given you, by an utter Detestation and Abhorrence of past Follies, and a strict Adherence to Duty, Sobriety, and Virtue.

I am too conscious that I fall a just Victim to the offended Laws of my Country, and the abused Clemency of a merciful Prince; and as I die in *Christian Charity* with all Men, so I hope the *major Part* of Mankind will be humane enough

enough to bury my Faults, and not by unjust and ungenerous Reproaches stain with Infamy an unhappy Family, and particularly a guiltless Son.

As by your kind Condescension in honouring me with a Letter, I have Reason to believe that the Ties of Nature are not quite dissipated, so I hope you will not refuse my last Request of an Interview before I die, that on my Knees I may receive the Pardon and Benediction of an offended, injured Parent, and that my Soul may take its Flight on Wings of Joy to Realms of Bliss and permanent Felicity.

This, Sir, is the earnest Petition of one who, tho' unhappy, begs to be deem'd,

Honour'd S I R,

Your most dutiful

And affectionate Son,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

Letter from Parsons to his Wife.

Dear Madam,

I HAVE, with the utmost Concern, received a Letter without a Name, intimating, that nothing is wanting towards a Reconciliation, but a Recantation of past Aspersions, and Contrition for former Faults. I confess myself guilty of the Allegations laid to my Charge; but if an unfeigned and sincere Sorrow can make any Atonement, believe I feel it in the strictest Degree. Pardon is what I earnestly and ardently request, refuse me not, nor yet this fervent Prayer,

Prayer, that before my fatal Day of Dissolution you will vouchsafe me the Happiness of a Reconcilement, and to share with an unhappy Man the *most holy and blessed Sacrament*, with an Interview with my dear injured, unfortunate Son.

This I hope you will not deny, as it is the Petition of him who, tho' wretched, and on the Verge of Life, begs to be accounted,

Dear Madam,

Your most affectionate Husband,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

Another Letter from Parsons to his Wife.

Dear Madam,

When Souls that should agree to will the same,

To have one common Object for their Wishes,

Look different Ways, regardless of each other,

— What a Train of Wretchedness ensues !

I Have too fatally experienc'd, and every succeeding Day is an Aggravation of my Misery. That I have injur'd you in the nicest Point I allow, with conscious Shame, and sincere Sorrow ; but as my present Circumstances are too dismal to admit of any exaggerating Scenes, and as I stand hovering on the Verge of Life, ready to launch into an unknown World, from whose Bourne no Traveller has ever returned, so I cannot think but your Soul is too noble, at such a Crisis, to upbraid me for my past Offences, or chide me for my Breach of sacred Duty.

Consider,

Consider, Madam, my present Situation, and as your Heart is Woman, subject to the tenderer Passions, and in whose Breast is strongly sown the Seeds of Virtue, so (meretricious as I am) I cannot think but that Love which gave you to my Arms, will re-assume its Empire, in your Breast, and deem me at least worthy your Compassion. If, like some rude Spoiler, I reap'd your blooming Charms, yet thoughtless flung those Charms away, unmindful of their Worth; I rather merit Pity than Contempt for this my Weakness. And tho' I own I have too justly incurr'd your Resentment, yet my heart-piercing Miseries, and agonizing Sorrows, might claim some Share of Forgiveness, had I no other Title; and tho' I did not rightly esteem the Value of that Title, yet the Tie is too sacred ever to be dissolved, and my Image (I hope) too strongly impress'd on your Mind to be eras'd.

When the Sun of my Life is in its Zenith, and I should be expected to shine in Meridian Lustre, behold me, like a fair opening Flower, blasted by a Southern Wind. See me, in a shatter'd Bark, ready to launch in a tempestuous Sea; no Chart to guide, no Compass for to steer my Course by, but left to the rough Waves and howling Winds, till that I sink beneath the dreadful Storm. How shocking is the Prospect! And what a dismal Night-Piece is here!

This Anticipation of my Miseries is still enhanced by the cruel wracking Thoughts of never seeing you, nor my dear injur'd Son; yet, perhaps, we may meet again, in Realms of never ending Bliss, no more to part. But shall we never meet here, and must I be deny'd in Death the Pleasure of an Interview, the Sweets of Pardon from an injur'd Wife, to cheer my fainting Soul.

Soul. Time seems to tread with hasty Strides,
and new-fledg'd Wings, and hurry me to my
approaching Fate. O fatal Doom! To be the
Scorn of Earth is surely insupportable. I, who
(had Reason rul'd, and Justice bore the Sway)
might have been the Comfort of my Friends,
the Joy of all, am now struck from the Race
of Men, as one who never had Being. Tor-
menting Pain! How my Soul shudders at the
gloomy Prospect.

Thought drives on Thought, and my Mind is
like a confus'd Chaos; for in my present Con-
dition, every Reflection adds to my Sorrow, and
I can scarce compose my Mind to Contempla-
tion, But oh! that dread Hereafter, that awful
Eternity, chills my Blood, and fills my Bosom
with ten thousand Fears.

Believe me, Madam, Language is too faint
to describe the Horrors of my Situation, or the
Calamities I endure, since the softest Scene here
is sufficient to melt the most obdurate Heart,
where Misery reigns in all her dread Array!
Allow me then, before I die, to beg to see you,
that tho' unworthy of your Love, I may meet
your Pardon and Pity; and if it is possible, meet
my Summons with an untroubled Mind.

Accept my hearty Prayers for the Preservation
and Happiness of you and my dear Child, on
whose Head I hope Reproaches for my Faults
will never fall; and since I cannot express my
real Pain, allow me to conclude in the same
Terms I begun my Letter.

*I have wrong'd thee much, and Heav'n has well
aveng'd it,*

*I have not, since we parted, been at Peace,
Nor known one Joy sincere; our broken Friendship
Pursu'd*

*Pursu'd me to the last Retreat of Love,
Stood glaring like a Ghost, and made me cold with
Horror.*

*Misfortunes on Misfortunes press upon me,
Swell o'er my Head, like Waves, and dash me down.
Sorrow, Remorse, and Shame, have torn my Soul,
They hang like Winter on my youthful Hopes,
And blast the Spring and Promise of my Year.*

I am, with unfeigned Esteem and Love,

Dear Madam,

Your most affectionate

And unhappy Husband,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

Letter to Mr. Parsons from his Wife.

Mr. Parsons,

IF my Advice may yet have any Effect on you for your own Good, I would not have you send my Petition to the King; I shall, by Tomorrow's Post, write to your Father, to desire him to come up directly, which I don't doubt, but on my Request, he will, and then we shall prefer a proper one; and what can be done for you will be with the Hopes, that if we should succeed, your future Life will atone for the past; if any Thing should happen to prevent his coming, I shall have a Letter on *Monday* next, when you may depend on hearing from me again, or on *Tuesday* without fail. I think you know me too well to doubt of my Truth, or think I have any Design to deceive you, but as all Endeavours may prove vain, I desire you will seriously think of dying; for, remember the same
Preparation

Preparation that makes you fit to die, make you fit to live; but I am sorry to tell you, your first Letter is a great deal too romantic, for one in your Circumstances: Mrs. *Jenkins* told me you did not know what Particulars to answer to my Note; I am sure your own Conscience might inform you; however, I shall say no more, but conjure you to repent seriously of all your Crimes, and don't deceive yourself by a false Repentance, for tho' all Means are tried, no one knows what the Event may be, but live or die, this you ought not to omit, which that you may not do, is the sincere Wish of

Monday Morn.

M. T. P.

Parsons's Answer to the Former.

Dear Madam,

YOURS of *Monday* I duly received, and am gratefully obliged to you for your kind Intimations and Advice; the which I shall strenuously endeavour to observe. I hope my Father will not refuse my Request of an Interview before Death, nor you neither, since that will greatly add to my Tranquility. When I reflect on past Instances, and the real Injuries I have done you, I cannot think there was any Thing romantic in my first Letter; but even admitting there was, the Suggestion which must arise from the Consideration of writing to a Person, to whom (unjustly) I had long been estranged; and the Thoughts which you may naturally imagine arose therefrom, might, in some Measure, flutter my Spirits, and occasion an Incongruity, but Romance none, since I only wrote the Language of my Heart.

Let my Fate be as it may, 'tis my Business now to prepare for Futurity, which I assure you I do, with all the Ardour I am capable; and I

K

hope

hope your Humanity will supersede Justice, and that you will forgive all past Injuries, and by a kind Condolence alleviate the Pangs, which results now from the miserable Situation of,

Dear Madam,
Your most affectionate,
Tho' unhappy, Husband,
W. PARSONS

Another Letter from Parsons to his Wife.

Dear Madam,

ALTHO' I can claim no Title to demand such a Favour, further than the Ties of Nature, and the Laws of God, yet I would fain flatter myself, bare Humanity, did nothing else excite, will influence you to accede thereto; and as I am sensible your Influence with my Father is great, beg your Intercession with him to use his arduous Endeavours to save my Life.

In my present Situation I can but promise and assert, Performances being beyond my Reach; but am fully persuaded, that my future Conduct and Behaviour will be regulated in such a Manner, as to afford not only you, but also all my Friends and Acquaintance, the utmost Satisfaction; and am convinced, every generous Breast that shall contribute to such Blessing, as that of protracting my Days, will be greatly pleased in being accessory to so happy an Issue, and saving a Life that may be serviceable to the Community.

Pardon, Madam, this *ipse dixit* Discourse, nor think me vain, since what I write, are the true Sentiments of my Mind, and such as (shall it please God to spare me) I shall always strictly adhere to, and strenuously endeavour to convince you how unfeignedly I am,

Dear Madam,

Your most affectionate Husband,

WILLIAM PARSONS.

A Let.

A Letter to Mr. Parsons from his Wife, the Sunday before his Execution.

Mr. Parsons,

Sunday Noon

According to my Promise I sent yours inclosed to your Father, and wrote to him in the Manner I sent you Word, but have never had an Answer, which I can attribute to nothing but the Letter's miscarrying, for I am sure he has a sincere Concern and Affection for you; I have done every Thing in my Power for you, but to no Purpose; my Aunt this Day delivered a Petition to the King, in your Father's Name and mine; what Effect it may have is very uncertain; she met with impertinent Usage from the Fellow and old Woman, who would not have had her gone; they had the Insolence to say I desired your Death; had that been the Case, I need not have given myself and others any Trouble in this Affair; as to them I despise 'em, and can't think, at this Time, you would be so base as to be concerned with them, or encourage their Insolence. Should this succeed, I hope your future Life will make Amends for so much Mercy; but as 'tis so uncertain, beg you will make a proper Use of the few Moments you have to live; as to your Request of seeing me it could not be, for I could not bear the Shock of seeing you in such Circumstances; I freely forgive you all Injuries whatever, and hope God will pardon all Crimes, support you in your last Moments, and receive you to his Mercy, which is the sincere Prayer and Hope of her, who was always

Your faithful and affectionate Wife.

P. S. My Grandmother and Aunt pray for you;—I can say no more.

*The Petition mentioned in the foregoing Letter was
as follows :*

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

*The Petition of William Parsons, and Mary
Tregonwell Parsons, Father and Wife to
the unhappy William Parsons, now under
Sentence of Death in Newgate, for re-
turning from Transportation,*

Most humbly Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners humbly implore
Your Majesty's most gracious Pardon for
the said *William Parsons*, and faithfully promise,
that if Your Majesty be pleased to grant the
same, they will take care for the Time to come,
that it shall not be in his Power to abuse Your
Majesty's Clemency, or injure any of Your Ma-
jesty's Subjects :

*And your Petitioners (as in Duty bound)
shall ever pray, &c.*

WILLIAM PARSONS,
MARY TREGONWELL PARSONS.

*A Letter to Parsons, from a Friend, delivered
the Morning of his Execution.*

11th Feb. at 4 in the Morning.

Dear Mr. Parsons,

THE abrupt Manner in which you were
hurried from me last Night, (even after a
Permission had been granted to spend Half an
Hour

Hour with you) prevented my proceeding in what I had begun seriously to tell you.

“ That you made me shudder,—(and may you
 “ shudder as you reflect on it) when you appealed
 “ to the *Ordinary*, then present, that you were
 “ now easy, as you had been permitted to take a
 “ final Leave of the Object of your Affections,
 “ which you added, he knew agitated your
 “ Mind so much at Chappel (tho’ you knew
 “ not why) that you could not contain your-
 “ self; the Agitations of your Countenance,
 “ which I perceived in you at Chappel, I flat-
 “ ter’d myself proceeded from a Mind truly
 “ convinc’d of Sin, and sincerely sorrowing for
 “ the same: But Oh! Sir, when in the Even-
 “ ing I return’d and found you parlying with
 “ the Delilah of your Heart, from whom you
 “ were in a few Hours to be separated, by the
 “ Execution of a just Sentence, and who added
 “ to the Corruption of your own Mind and
 “ Morals, was doubtless one of the many Causes
 “ that brought you into this earthly Condemna-
 “ tion,—and must shock every serious Mind, af-
 “ ter the repeated moving Exhortations, which
 “ the pious Mr. *Gibbons* had charitably given
 “ you, (and which many of the poor Souls now
 “ to suffer with you had not the Comfort of)
 “ and after the seeming Resolutions which you
 “ had made of plucking out a right Eye, and
 “ cutting off a right Arm, that you might en-
 “ ter maimed, &c. into Life eternal, rather than
 “ having two Eyes and two Arms, go down in-
 “ to Hell —But Oh! Sir, how is it that you
 “ will treat thus with your Maker?—What!
 “ hug and caress your Sins to the very last Mo-
 “ ment almost, that the Law permits you Life;
 “ and still boast of Ease and Serenity of Mind,
 “ and Expectations of Salvation thro’ the Me-
 “ rits of *Christ*, whom you are now willing,
 “ you

" you say, to receive into your Heart,— now
 " that the Law tears every Idol from you:—
 " But Oh! Sir, God is not mocked, — he is
 " a God of Justice, as well as tender Mercy;—
 " May you tremble at the Thought,— and
 " may the Thought so cause you to be wound-
 " ed, as to melt you into Tears of Sorrow
 " and deep Contrition.—Oh! cry bitterly un-
 " to him, whose Mercy and Forbearance you
 " have so long provoked, for that Sorrow of
 " Heart, which he has promised, do not despise;—
 " On these few Moments depend Eternity;—
 " Oh! that now in this late Hour you might
 " seek his Face, before whose awful Presence
 " you must soon appear;—Oh! that you had
 " read and laid to Heart, the Account given of
 " Mr. *MacLaine*, whose Case ought to have af-
 " fected you, and copied his dying Example;
 " Oh! that you may weep and lament, having
 " much to be forgiven.—The God of *Jacob* &
 " knew to be more compassionate and merciful
 " than *Jacob* was, who refused to bless his Son
 " *Esau*, (after that he had despised the Blessing)
 " tho' he sought it with Tears,—But do you
 " wrestle with him for the Blessing of Pardon
 " and Forgiveness,—and may he have Mercy
 " on your poor Soul, for *Jesus Christ's* Sake.
 " Amen and Amen—Time fails me to add more."

F I N I S.